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Annual Report to the Economic and Social Council

Summary

This report is prepared annually to comply with General Assembly resolutions 59/250 and 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, as well as UNICEF Executive Board decision 1995/5 on the format and content of the Annual Report to the Economic and Social Council. The report provides information about the direction UNICEF is taking to work closely with other members of the United Nations system to ensure sustainable results for children.

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I. Introduction

1. This report covers 2008, the first year following the adoption, in December 2007, of the General Assembly resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/62/208). It also covers the third year of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) for 2006-2011, when the midterm review of the MTSP was conducted. UNICEF has aligned its strategic framework with the focus of the 2007 TCPR and its provisions for the operational activities of the United Nations system. More detailed response to the 2007 TCPR is contained in the UNICEF Action Plan, available on the UNICEF website.

2. The report focuses on how UNICEF, in the context of the 2007 TCPR, is working with governments, the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address the rights and well-being of children. The report illustrates UNICEF contributions to the coherence of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, national capacity-building, South-South cooperation, gender equality and transition from relief to development.

3. This report complements the Annual Report of the Executive Director on progress in achieving the targets of the MTSP in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and related commitments, as well as the response to the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2008/CRP.12). Trends in progress and performance against key indicators of the MTSP will be analyzed in the Data Companion that will accompany the Annual Report of the Executive Director.

II. Overall approach to the role and functioning of development cooperation of the United Nations system

A. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

4. In 2007, official development assistance from the 22 countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development fell by 8.4 per cent in real terms to an estimated $103.7 billion. Excluding debt forgiveness, there was a small rise of 2.4 per cent in aid from 2006 to 2007. UNICEF itself recorded an increase in income of 8 per cent in 2007 over 2006 and expects a modest overall increase in income of 2.6 per cent in 2008.

5. Pledges received during the United Nations Pledging Conference in November 2007 combined with pledges from the ninth UNICEF pledging event held during the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 2008 amounted to $383.8 million from 48 Governments, including both industrialized and programme countries. Detailed results of pledging events are available in the Executive Board report (E/ICEF/2008/7 (Part I)).

6. As of September 2008, UNICEF had recorded regular resources income of $578 million from government donors against the medium-term financial plan projections of $609 million for 2008. Total regular resources income from all

sources for 2008 is projected to be $1,136 million. The current share of regular to total resources is 26 per cent.

7. The TCPR stressed that core resources continue to be the bedrock of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, due to their untied nature. UNICEF shares the concern of the General Assembly over the persisting imbalance between core and non-core contributions in view of the crucial importance that the former have for UNICEF in fulfilling its operational and normative mandate across all regions.

8. Contributions to other resources recorded from Governments as of September 2008 were $877 million. Of this amount, $566 million went to other resources-regular, against a financial plan of $893 million, while $311 million went to other resources-emergency, against a financial plan of $339 million. As of 30 September 2008, total other resources income from all sources was $1,628 million — 83 per cent of the planned target of $1,955 million for 2008.

9. The TCPR has repeatedly underscored the need for the United Nations system to have access to flexible and predictable funding. The 2007 TCPR (A/62/73-E/2007/52) mentions thematic funding as an innovative approach to improve predictability of funding for development activities. In the report on thematic funding presented to the Executive Board during its second regular session of 2008 (E/ICEF/2008/22), UNICEF emphasized that the steady and proportional increase of thematic funds has been an indicator of success and an organizational priority. Thematic funding reinforces the results-based approach by helping to shift the programmatic focus of cooperation from inputs and activities to outcomes and sustainable results for children. It remains a growing proportion of total funding for UNICEF. In 2007, thematic funding for the five MTSP focus areas and humanitarian response represented 15 per cent of other resources, reaching the MTSP target for this indicator. As of the end of September, UNICEF had received $160 million in thematic funds for 2008.

10. Funds received through inter-organizational arrangements are another important resource for UNICEF cooperation, and represent a relatively recent trend, related to United Nations coherence. As of 30 September 2008, UNICEF had recorded $196 million in income from these sources. Multi-donor funds, or pooled resources, are a large part of these funding arrangements and are directed mostly to humanitarian responses and post-crisis recovery. They include, among others, Common Humanitarian Funds in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Republic of Sudan, Humanitarian Response Funds in Ethiopia and Somalia, the Iraq Trust Fund, allocations by the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund to various joint programmes, the One UN Fund for United Nations pilot countries, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, and others. In 2007 the contributions received by UNICEF through such funding modalities amounted to $106 million, 44 per cent more than in 2006. By the end of September 2008, pooled and multi-donor funds had totalled $61 million and UNICEF had recorded $97 million income from Central Emergency Response Fund grants, administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

11. UNICEF had received $566 million in other resources designated to humanitarian assistance by the end of September 2008 from all sources of funding, a sum that represents 35 per cent of total other resources. The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative continues to positively influence funding for humanitarian

response. As of 30 September, the emergency response of UNICEF in 2008 had covered 70 emergencies, including 13 Consolidated Appeal Processes, with a 51 per cent funding level, as well as 10 Flash Appeals, with a funding level of 56 per cent. The funding level of 47 other crises appeals (including 'neglected crises') was 33 per cent. Significant further regular resources contributions from the private sector will be received and recorded at the end of 2008.

12. Broadening the donor base is a strategy UNICEF employs to promote the long-term financial sustainability of its work and mission. UNICEF private sector donors have traditionally contributed around 30 per cent of total income. Private sector contributions from January to September 2008, including from National Committees for UNICEF, Global Funds and Foundations and private sector fund-raising in programme countries amounted to $418 million, or 18 per cent of total income. Significant further regular resources contributions from the private sector will be received and recorded at the end of 2008.

13. Income from non-DAC donor countries ($21 million in 2007), while important, is yet to reach a significant percentage of the total. As part of its resource mobilization strategy, UNICEF is investing in partnerships with emerging donors, such as China, India, Kuwait, Oman, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the new European Union members.

B. Contribution to national capacity development and development effectiveness

Capacity development

14. UNICEF intensified its focus on capacity development support to national partners in 2008, emphasizing scaling up the provision of essential services to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Among the many areas covered were data and knowledge management, policy development, delivery of essential services for children and institution-strengthening. Cross-sectoral situation analyses of children and women were supported in a number of countries during 2008.

15. In knowledge management and policy development, UNICEF supported national evidence-based decision-making towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the use of analytical tools. In support of Goals 4, 5 and 6, UNICEF assisted national partners in the use of the Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) tool for results-based planning and resource allocation. As a result, many countries have designed and are financing solid investment cases as part of sector and national plans to improve child health. High-impact child survival measures have been further prioritized in the district plans and budgets of a number of countries, including Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Honduras, Madagascar, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

16. UNICEF made substantial efforts in the West and Central Africa region in supporting the national development of policies and plans for scaling up maternal, newborn and child health, including through the integration of health-related Millennium Development Goals into poverty reduction strategies and sector-wide approaches (SWAps). Through continued application of the MBB tool, and related changes in terms of budgetary allocation and expenditure on health-related Goals, a

number of countries have extended free access for parents and children to critical health services (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria, Republic of the Congo). In line with ongoing decentralization efforts, significant progress has been made in developing strategies for promoting community-based interventions at scale and reinforcing community capacities.

17. To strengthen the capacity of countries to monitor progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to conduct evidence-based situation analyses, the use of DevInfo was supported in all regions by UNICEF as part of the work of United Nations country teams. Technical and financial support from UNICEF and other United Nations agencies enabled the training of some 10,000 people (including through an e-course) in the use and maintenance of DevInfo across all regions in 2008. On-the-ground technical support was provided to 46 countries in the use of DevInfo for advanced data management.

18. In 2005-2008, 52 countries carried out Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) with UNICEF support. In Malawi, for example, UNICEF supported the National Statistical Office in carrying out the household survey, which provided, for the first time, statistically valid district-level estimates on the situation of children and women. The information has contributed to establishing baselines for a number of national programmes, including the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, and accelerated child survival and development. This cooperation has enhanced the capacity of the National Statistical Office to conduct high-quality large-scale household surveys and to upload the data into the Malawi Socio-Economic Database, a customized version of DevInfo.

19. Capacity development for enhanced service delivery was supported in many areas of the MTSP. This report provides examples of strategic capacity development initiatives in areas where accelerated effort is needed in many countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including nutrition, child, newborn and maternal survival, water and sanitation, and education, including communication for behaviour change, and fighting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and other diseases, such as pneumonia and diarrhea.

20. In cooperative efforts towards achieving the Goal 1 target on reducing undernutrition, UNICEF engaged in comprehensive capacity-strengthening and international networking involving Governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to provide ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTFs) to children faced with acute malnutrition. Modelled on therapeutic milk formulations given to children who are treated at health facilities, RUTFs are equivalent products in the form of pastes, normally peanut-based, that can be used at home. RUTFs thus save costs associated with in-patient treatment and care and the time of family members who otherwise would have to accompany the acutely malnourished child for a long period in a facility.

21. UNICEF has been involved in capacity development for the production and use of RUTFs in a number of ways. These include working with Governments and local NGO partners in expanding the coverage of community treatment and care programmes, thereby increasing the demand for RUTFs; and facilitating cost-effective international procurement of the product by 45 countries in 2007-2008. UNICEF, in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), Doctors Without Borders and the Clinton Foundation, has been engaged in efforts to encourage the food-processing industry to increase the

number and scope of regional or county production facilities in developing countries. UNICEF collaboration with the private sector has resulted in the operation of franchises in the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Niger and Malawi. Three more facilities are planned for start-up in 2009, in Ghana, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania. A second company has been licensed to initiate production in Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi and Zambia. It is expected that additional facilities will be operational in India, Nigeria, South Africa and Yemen during 2009.

22. Sustained support for accelerated child, newborn and maternal survival and development is another capacity-development initiative involving African countries facing severe challenges in achieving Goals 4, 5 and 6. Under MTSP focus area 1, UNICEF is, for example, supporting the Government of Angola to increase the coverage of an essential revitalization package for mother, newborn and child survival through the integration of health services and water and sanitation interventions. The strategy supports the national decentralization programme by building capacity at the municipal level for comprehensive planning, training, budgeting, and provision of supplies and equipment. In Benin, a United Nations-led partnership is supporting the Government in the elaboration of the national strategy document for maternal, newborn and child survival. In Ghana, UNICEF has provided substantial technical support to the development by the Ministry of Health of its Five-year Strategic Plan (2007-2011) and the 2008 Operational Programme of Work, leading to the prioritization of 'high impact, rapid delivery' of essential services to achieve the health-related Goals. Madagascar is currently pursuing health sector reform and the strengthening of the health system to ensure a focus on poor and underserved families. The Government of Madagascar elaborated its 2006-2008 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework using the MBB tool. UNICEF in Mozambique is supporting the Ministry of Health and its provincial directorates, in collaboration with a range of partners, to implement accelerated child, newborn and maternal survival and development activities within the national health sector plan.

23. UNICEF has played a key role in harmonizing support to country efforts in accelerated national scale-up of malaria prevention and control in sub-Saharan Africa. Several approaches and mechanisms are being used to scale up malaria prevention and control interventions by focusing on delivery as an integral component of broader programming for maternal, neonatal and child health.

24. Extensive training and equipping of "front-line" health workers to deliver high-impact health and nutrition interventions are important components of UNICEF support for capacity development. In Ethiopia, Malawi and Mozambique, the skills of health extension workers are being enhanced to deliver a package of services as defined in national plans. In Ghana, Mali and Niger, community-based agents have been trained to deliver interventions at the community level as part of the programme of work of the Ministry of Health.

25. Through *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS*, UNICEF, in conjunction with UNAIDS and others, has been working to place children in the centre of the response to AIDS. To better serve children, UNICEF and partners monitor global progress to 2010 goals on prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), paediatric treatment, prevention and protection through an annual stocktaking report. The third *Stocktaking Report on Children and AIDS* launched in December 2008 demonstrates progress made on a number of fronts. PMTCT is one such area where concrete action has demonstrated concrete results. In almost ten years since

the first PMTCT pilots were launched in 1998, 109 low- and middle-income countries have developed and started implementation of national PMTCT programmes. UNICEF, in partnership with members of the Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on prevention in pregnant women, mothers and their children has provided significant technical and financial support to countries in all regions in piloting and rolling out such programmes. In 2007 alone, UNICEF supported 41 countries to accelerate the scaling-up of PMTCT and paediatric HIV care, support and treatment services through high-level advocacy at global partners' forums; joint inter-agency technical missions to support national policies and programmes; capacity-building workshops; and technical support for the design, coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. UNICEF contributed to broader health system-strengthening by providing technical advice on supply-chain management for PMTCT and paediatric HIV care and treatment, drug and diagnostics commodities, laboratory support for CD4 and Polymerase Chain Reaction/Dried Blood Spot for early infant diagnosis, and information systems to track the progress of the national response.

26. All 109 countries implementing national PMTCT programmes have defined national policies and standard operating procedures to guide the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cascade of PMTCT interventions. However, as globally recommended standards and guidelines are continuously evolving in light of scientific evidence, the revised guidance is continually incorporated into country-level policies. In 2007, UNICEF supported revision of the national PMTCT guidelines by 42 countries to enable institutionalization of provider-initiated testing and counselling in maternal, neonatal and child health settings, shifting from single-drug regimens to more effective combination antiretroviral regimens for PMTCT; integrating cotrimoxazole prophylaxis; and incorporating other recommendations for improving the coverage and effectiveness of preventive interventions. With the support of UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS and the Clinton Foundation, extensive training programmes were implemented by many countries.

27. UNICEF, together with WHO and UNAIDS, continued to support countries' efforts to strengthen their national monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for PMTCT and paediatric HIV programming. More broadly, UNICEF continued to assist Governments in preparing their funding proposals to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and to the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

28. Enhancing capacity for monitoring was another significant area of cooperation during the year. The UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for water supply and sanitation, for example, facilitated the strengthening of national capacity for monitoring the water and sanitation sector through the training of statisticians and data managers and the formation of Government-NGO networks for sector monitoring in several countries.

29. In the education sector, capacity development initiatives have focused on increasing the capacity of school principals and teachers in the 'child-friendly schools' concept and approach, as well as interactive child-centred teaching and learning methods. This work was undertaken in a wide range of countries. In India, teacher resource centres, connected through the Internet to provide state-of-the-art web-based resources, were established in a number of states. Other initiatives to

improve the quality of education include the introduction of the use of Braille for teachers in Bhutan to reach visually challenged children; and the conducting of rapid assessments and the establishment of learning spaces for children out of school in Sudan. Supporting governments to develop decentralized district plans on education, an integral part of SWAps in education, has helped countries such as Ghana and Nigeria to strengthen their ability to include hard-to-reach families and children out of school. The joint capacity development of UNICEF and government staff in the use of various tools for emergency preparedness and response in education has begun in Asia and several countries affected by conflict in sub-Saharan Africa.

30. In child protection, UNICEF continued to support the development and strengthening of national laws and institutions to create a more protective environment for children. For example, a new juvenile justice law in line with international standards was adopted by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Juvenile justice laws are under review in Bhutan, Cambodia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan and Togo. Madagascar, South Africa and Zimbabwe passed laws to address sexual offences against children. Meanwhile, a number of countries have drafted or finalized national strategies to address violence against women and children. UNICEF supported the establishment of specialized children's courts and police units in all regions through cooperation in training judiciary and police services. Child-sensitive courts have been created by Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique, and a special judicial unit has been established in Albania. New special police units, with trained personnel and child-sensitive procedures, were established in Bhutan, the Maldives, Pakistan and the Republic of Sudan, among other countries. In Mauritania, a child-oriented police brigade is now operational with appropriate premises and with personnel comprising male and female officers. In Armenia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, child protection has been included in the curriculum for police training.

South-South Cooperation

31. In 2008, UNICEF participated in inter-agency discussions on the recommendations on South-South Cooperation (SSC) for the Policy Committee of the Secretary-General. This was led by the Special Unit for SSC in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The analysis highlighted the fragmentation across the United Nations system for support to SSC, while recommending (a) that the United Nations system organizations and partners develop an action-oriented and collaborative framework to tackle three specific cross-border challenges: climate change; food insecurity; and HIV and AIDS; (b) that specific policy measures be introduced to ensure more systematic mainstreaming of SSC across the United Nations system; and (c) that intergovernmental events be used as means for renewing commitments to SSC. UNICEF provided substantive inputs to this analysis. The Secretary-General's policy decision on SSC has been circulated to heads of United Nations system organizations.

32. Through various United Nations platforms, UNICEF has supported the sharing of experiences of countries from the South with countries in the North and South. For example, UNICEF organized an Open Dialogue, which included government, World Bank, NGO and other participants who shared country experiences and ideas on how to utilize national and local budgets as instruments for the realization of

human rights, particularly those of children. Among the experiences shared was that of Ecuador, where UNICEF has supported broad civic participation in the formulation and monitoring of public policies affecting children, including budgetary decisions. The process has contributed to a significant and sustained increase in social spending over the past seven years in Ecuador, where basic social services have been improved and expanded. This experience is being adopted by Paraguay and other countries.

33. UNICEF, in close cooperation with the World Bank and the Special Unit on SSC, and supported by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, contributed to another forum on "the South as a knowledge hub" in the United Nations Secretariat as a pre-event to the celebration of the Fourth United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation in December 2007. The event profiled successful initiatives from Brazil (participatory budgeting), Mexico (conditional cash transfers) and Uganda (HIV prevention strategies) in promoting children's rights.

34. The International Learning Exchange is an interactive programme introduced by the Government of India in 2006 with UNICEF support. It aims to develop a platform for identifying and sharing knowledge about technological models for water and environmental sanitation that could be replicated in other countries. The number of developing countries participating in this initiative increased from 7 in 2006 to 35 in 2007.

35. In Latin America, UNICEF has been supporting the ongoing Pro-inclusion subregional programme (2008-2012) covering nine countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Pro-inclusion aims to tackle the challenges Latin America faces in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by promoting social inclusion and the reduction of ethnic disparities through South-South technical cooperation, innovative public policy approaches, and the development of regional and subregional development frameworks. All countries are engaged in policy dialogue involving representatives of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendents as well as government leaders.

36. UNICEF facilitated South-South cooperation during 2007-2008 in other areas strategic to child survival, protection and development, including through facilitating the organization of the third and fourth *Laços Sul-Sul* ("South-South ties"), an inter-country initiative that contributes to the achievement of universal access to prevention, care and treatment for HIV and AIDS, with a special focus on children, adolescents, and pregnant women. Meetings on cooperation involved Bolivia, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Sao Tome and Principe, and Timor-Leste. The initiative has contributed to an increase in access to antiretroviral treatment for children and significant reductions in mother-to-child transmission of HIV in all participating countries. In addition, UNICEF facilitated the donation of HIV rapid-testing equipment and antiretroviral drugs among the participating countries, and supported the creation of publications and a new website on the initiative.

37. In a further example, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the South-South cooperation programme of the Government of Thailand, including by co-organizing seven courses: on HIV/AIDS prevention and care, PMTCT, child-friendly schools, child rights sensitization, child and youth participation, nutrition,

and water and sanitation. This cooperation involved 18 countries in Asia, the Pacific and Africa.

38. UNICEF has worked with the Special Unit for SSC to raise awareness about children and women affected by migration. The goal was to improve country-specific migration data and analysis on the circumstances of children and women left behind, and to increase understanding of the impact of remittances. In 2008, UNICEF supported the development of 10 country reports on this issue in Albania, Barbados, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, the Philippines and South Africa.

39. Child Rights Observatories in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and other countries have initiated important dialogue and exchange visits to cross-fertilize experiences in this area. Monitoring indicators have been established, and DevInfo is being used for maintaining databases. In the area of education reform and child-friendly schools, UNICEF has promoted study tours between countries and a Learning Series to exchange good practices in promoting girls' education.

40. UNICEF has consistently worked to facilitate the sharing of technologies benefiting children, including water-pumps, oral rehydration salts, insecticide-treated mosquito nets, fortified foods and paediatric medicines. This is supported by technologies for knowledge creation, management and dissemination. This area forms a key component of UNICEF cooperation in many countries.

Gender mainstreaming

41. The Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF was finalized in early 2008 at a time when many multilateral and bilateral institutions were reviewing and attempting to strengthen their gender mainstreaming and integration processes. The evaluation reflected the recognition by UNICEF that progress in all MTSP focus areas depends on advances in gender equality and should be aligned with the broader goal of achieving more gender-equal societies. The evaluation confirmed the conviction of UNICEF that organizational performance on gender mainstreaming could be improved.

42. The evaluation made clear that UNICEF faced challenges similar to those of other development organizations in implementing policy on gender mainstreaming. While highlighting numerous institutional weaknesses, the findings also showed that UNICEF had generated many good practices in gender equality programming. Nevertheless, these had tended to result from individual efforts and to be restricted in scope, given the limited systems in place to facilitate the sharing and wider consideration adoption of these policies. The evaluation presented a broad set of recommendations covering policy and strategy development, capacity development, the programming process, financing, partnerships, including within the United Nations system, and gender mainstreaming in emergencies. It noted that many of these challenges were most acute in UNICEF humanitarian support efforts. The analysis of the evaluation was largely validated by the reviews on gender mainstreaming undertaken as part of the 2008 midterm review of the UNICEF MTSP, and is addressed in the response to the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation (E/ICEF/2009/5).

43. These recommendations accord with the provisions of the TCPR, which highlighted the need for all operational agencies to improve gender mainstreaming

in monitoring, accountability structures and knowledge management; to build internal capacity; and to better reflect the role of men and boys. UNICEF is committed to follow-up on the key recommendations of the gender evaluation and to deliver on the commitments reflected in the 2007 TCPR.

44. UNICEF has made particular efforts to strengthen the incorporation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into its work and to support national reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, by issuing new guidance to UNICEF field offices in this area. The number of field offices providing support to the national reporting process has increased markedly, from 22 in 2006 to 40 in 2007. In addition, country programmes of cooperation have made better use of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations. For example, the UNICEF office in Azerbaijan reported progress on research and data collection on early marriage as the result of the Committee's consideration of the State Party's report.

45. In partnership with the Wellesley Centers for Women, UNICEF convened an Asian regional conference on Women and Children: the Human Rights Relationship, in December 2007. This was organized as part of UNICEF work on the interrelationship of women's and children's rights and was attended by the chairs of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

46. UNICEF is working with UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to promote joint United Nations country team (UNCT) reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. A total of 36 UNCTs have submitted joint reports at the Committee's request. Furthermore, through a partnership with the International Women's Rights Action Watch — Asia Pacific, UNICEF provided technical assistance and support to NGO participants in the reporting review process at the 40th session of that organization.

47. There are numerous examples of cooperation for gender equality in UNICEF-assisted country programmes, including through United Nations inter-agency collaboration. In Azerbaijan, for example, the United Nations Theme Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women brought together representatives of United Nations agencies, Government, and international partners to promote gender mainstreaming in United Nations-assisted programmes, joint United Nations programmes on gender equality, and regular exchange of information and expertise. In Zimbabwe, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) resulted in collaborative support for activities on prevention and control of gender-based violence, in which UNICEF works with UNDP, UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM. These activities were guided by the National Gender Policy, the National Gender-Based Violence Strategy and recommendations of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children.

48. UNICEF Zimbabwe has developed a tool to quantify key efforts to address gender issues, which has been used by non-governmental partners, faith-based organizations and Government Ministries. Meanwhile, in Swaziland, UNICEF — in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the police force and NGOs, as well as the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — facilitated the first national study on violence against girls, which will provide a baseline for informing future interventions. The study results confirmed the need to strengthen programmes that respond to gender-based violence.

49. UNICEF continued to play a strong role in inter-agency cooperation on gender. With UNIFEM, UNICEF began an Action Learning process on behalf of the former United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Gender Task Team. This process supports and evaluates joint programming efforts for the promotion of gender equality in three pilot countries: Albania, Morocco and Nepal. UNICEF led a meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to develop the initial work plan of the Secretary-General's Campaign on Violence against Women. The results framework from this workshop was adopted as the Framework for Action and the Programme of the United Nations Activities and Expected Outcomes and Outputs for the Secretary-General's Campaign 'Unite to End Violence against Women 2008-2015'. UNICEF participated in the Working Group established to provide inputs to the President of the General Assembly on potential changes to the United Nations' gender architecture.

Transition from relief to development

50. UNICEF activities in this area have undergone considerable expansion, a trend that is likely to continue. Recovery and Risk Reduction capacity was established in Emergency Operations through a separate unit in response to increased demand from UNICEF field offices for support in this area. This capacity will enable UNICEF to engage more effectively in the growing number of United Nations interdepartmental and multilateral forums dealing with post-conflict transition and peace-building, natural disaster recovery, and risk reduction.

51. UNICEF actions in transition are fully aligned with the TCPR guiding principles and policy directions. Planning of UNICEF support for recovery actions starts systematically from the beginning of the relief phase, including through the participation of UNICEF in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Cluster Working Group for Early Recovery. Supporting national capacity development is key and will be strengthened through the development of policy guidance in this area, expected to be operational in 2009.

52. UNICEF is a strong partner in joint inter-departmental and inter-agency policy, coordination and planning mechanisms for transition. Examples include UNICEF engagement in and support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, including through secondment of a staff member, and contributions to the United Nations-World Bank partnership agreement for crisis and post-crisis, the newly configured UNDG Working Group for Post Crisis and Transition, country-level Integrated Mission Task Forces, and the United Nations Inter-agency Framework for Coordinating Early Warning and Preventive Action.

53. UNICEF played a central role in the establishment of a new partnership between the United Nations organizations and the World Bank in crisis and post-crisis response covering three components: (a) a high-level political statement; (b) operational guidance; and (c) funding arrangements. These agreements will greatly increase efficiency and effectiveness on the ground.

54. At country level, UNICEF has supported major relief effort, and has fully participated in post-crisis needs assessments and joint assessment missions, taking the lead as necessary on social service sectors and child protection.

55. UNICEF is working towards strengthening policies and actions in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster management, contributing to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

56. As a major step to systematically addressing early recovery, the revision of the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies includes early recovery planning and action from the outset of humanitarian response. The revision aims at strengthening national ownership of the post-crisis response, including the promotion of participatory approaches and direct involvement of communities and children; determining national capacity-building requirements for scaling-up and sustaining post crisis response and outcomes; ensuring UNICEF participation in post-crisis and post-disaster needs assessments to determine damage and losses and needs of the population; and establishing sequenced priorities, actions and results for recovery response.

C. Improved functioning of the United Nations development system

57. The review of the inter-agency coordinating mechanisms highlighted in the 2008 UNICEF Annual Report to the Economic and Social Council has been completed. As a result of the recommended changes, UNDG is now the third High Level Committee under the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination, and meets at the level of Deputy Executive Directors. This change has been instrumental in expanding the engagement of United Nations organizations beyond the initial four Executive Committee members.

58. UNICEF is involved in the current functional review of the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO, formerly the United Nations Development Group Office), and will continue to support the streamlined functioning of the CEB and its subsidiary groups.

59. The World Bank and UNICEF reached in 2008 a global agreement for Young Child Survival and Development enabling government partners to use UNICEF procurement services to procure supplies and services for health programmes funded by the World Bank. This will allow quick action and increased efficiency and effectiveness at the field level.

Coherence, effectiveness and relevance

60. UNICEF, as part of the UNDG delegation, participated in the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, in Accra in September 2008. UNICEF called on all development partners to work in a more coherent, coordinated and harmonized manner in order to deliver sustained results, including for the Millennium Development Goals. The need for more progress in ensuring aid effectiveness and supporting countries which are far from achieving the Goals but receive relatively little development assistance was underlined.

61. The Forum adopted the Accra Agenda for Action, built on the earlier Paris Declaration, which gives more specific expression to issues of national ownership and capacity development. The Agenda also addresses new areas, including the increasing diversity of aid providers, with an emphasis on South-South cooperation and solutions; the role of civil society and State-citizen mutual accountability; and the impact of climate change and food and fuel price increases.

62. UNICEF was one of the main authors of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UNDAF guidelines, and continues to advocate for a rigorous and light programming process which fully reflects national priorities and plans. UNICEF regional offices provide oversight and technical support during development of the CCA and UNDAF.

63. Considerable progress has been made on increasing coherence in United Nations-wide programming at country level. This progress is both reflected in and further guided by the updated CCA/UNDAF guidelines issued in 2007. The UNDAF has been central to operationalizing the Delivering as One country pilots.

64. A UNCT works optimally when an empowered Resident Coordinator leads a country team in support of national development goals. To this end, considerable progress has been made in establishing the Resident Coordinator as an empowered and accountable team leader, especially through agreements reached by the UNDG and endorsed by the CEB. Previously, the success of the Resident Coordinator largely depended on personal characteristics and agency background, rather than on institutional structure. Two changes in particular represent a major step forward in this regard: making the responsibilities of the Country Director of UNDP more equivalent to those of the UNCT members; and making all UNCT members accountable to the Resident Coordinator for UNCT-related matters. As a result, the Resident Coordinator is freer to act impartially, held accountable by Regional Directors/Managers Teams. UNICEF seconded eight staff members to serve as Resident Coordinators in 2007.

65. In addition, the efforts to strengthen DOCO to facilitate oversight of the resident coordinator system, under the supervision of the Advisory Group of the UNDG, will enhance collaboration among members of the UNCTs. The existing concept of theme groups for designing and implementing cooperation in the framework of the UNDAF is being further developed, especially in the eight pilot countries, to create 'clusters' of lead agencies or designated individuals for particular topics.

66. UNICEF participated actively in the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, which elaborated a Comprehensive Framework of Action for a coordinated response from the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions. UNICEF contributed its specific perspective on the vulnerability of children and women and the need to give equal emphasis to both food and nutrition security. UNICEF allocated $55 million, within the context of UNCT action, to over 50 countries to strengthen their information and assessment systems to monitor the impact of high food prices, and to scale up nutrition interventions, particularly the treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition.

Transactions cost and efficiency

67. Many field staff members identify the lack of harmonization in business practices as a major constraint to working better across agencies. In the context of the High-Level Committee on Management Action Plan for Harmonization of Business Practices, UNICEF in 2008 held a meeting of country, regional and headquarters staff on business practices to identify the bottlenecks and follow-up actions. The outputs of the meeting have made an important contribution to the inter-agency decisions and actions.

68. Progress has been made on increasing the number and value of 'common services' in some countries. In 2007, 100 country offices (88 per cent) reported that they had at least one common service, up from 75 country offices in 2005. Seventy field offices (up from 59) reported that they are located in shared premises with at least one other United Nations agency.

69. The introduction of Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) has led to further alignment within the funds and programmes on transferring resources to Governments, though much remains to be accomplished in this area. A total of 50 countries had completed an assurance and audit plan as part of the HACT process by September 2008, and 15 countries had fully implemented the HACT.

70. In 2008, UNICEF launched a knowledge-sharing tool on United Nations coherence. This email-based resource centre, Achieving Strategic Knowledge (ASK), gives fast and coordinated responses to queries from field offices, as well as offices in headquarters and National Committees for UNICEF. The majority of queries have been on funding mechanisms and business processes.

71. Follow-up to TCPR resolutions requires greater cooperation among United Nations entities working at the regional level. Regional Directors Teams are now established in all regions. The UNDG is currently developing support mechanisms for the smooth operation of these teams. Regional offices of agencies are encouraged to co-locate, to ensure that they cover common geographical regions. To enhance inter-agency communication, UNICEF has cooperated with other operational agencies in establishing support centres and 'hubs' in Bangkok, Dakar, Panama City and Johannesburg.

72. UNICEF is committed to supporting and participating in joint programmes wherever they are results-based and enhance the capacity of national partners. The number of joint programmes in which UNICEF participates rose from 106 in 2005 to 121 in 2007, in 59 countries compared to 46 in 2005. In the eight 'Delivering as One' pilot countries, UNICEF has provided leadership in developing joint programmes in health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, HIV and AIDS, and child protection. Capacity assessments have confirmed that UNICEF is a major contributor to joint programmes and continues to provide programmatic and operational support to national partners implementing these programmes.

73. Increases in the number of joint programmes will not be rapid, as new programmes are primarily identified during the preparation of country programmes of cooperation. In many instances, considerable efforts in joint programmes are made in the preparation of the CCA and UNDAF as well as the overall operational documents, and include support given to poverty reduction strategy papers and SWAps led by Governments. Further, as the work of the United Nations increasingly aims to support national efforts for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the focus is more on United Nations agencies' contribution to national development efforts and less on the joint programmes of the United Nations agencies themselves.

74. A major success of 'Delivering as One' has been the improved communication and working relationships among members of the UNCTs. However, pilot countries report that support for change management should continue. In this regard, UNICEF has supported capacity assessments of UNCTs. As co-chair of the UNDG Task Team on Change Management in 2008, UNICEF will continue to help to develop the

analysis of how the composition and skills of United Nations staff should change as countries increase their own capacities.

75. UNICEF has helped to resolve inter-agency bottlenecks in information and communications technology (ICT). In 2008, UNICEF took part in missions to Mozambique, Viet Nam, Pakistan, and the United Republic of Tanzania to find solutions to constraints encountered by country teams in working together. In Mozambique, a design developed for a United Nations-wide network has been funded, and is being assembled. At the system-wide level, UNICEF in 2008 volunteered to lead the business process harmonization initiative of the CEB High-Level Committee on Management dealing with the phased transition to international standards and best practices throughout all IT-related domains.

76. Other outcomes in harmonization related to ICT in 2008 include pilots for a United Nations-wide common email directory in Pakistan and the use of a common domain name for Resident Coordinator offices to delineate their work from that of UNDP. UNICEF participates in a multi-agency long-term agreement for the provision of telecommunications services over satellite networks in an effort to contain costs and improve service delivery. UNICEF will continue to support efforts for bundling the purchasing and negotiation power of the United Nations in relation to major mainstream vendors for IT goods and services.

77. Since 2006, UNICEF has led the sub-cluster on data communications service provision within the emergency telecommunications cluster. UNICEF field and headquarters staff members have facilitated the use of common standards and guidelines by United Nations, NGO and stand-by partners during humanitarian preparedness and response. Through this joint agency effort, data communications services in emergencies have become more predictable, reliable and efficient.

78. As part of this effort, a standard training curriculum has been established, offering workshops on wireless and emergency telecommunications and data communications. The curriculum enables United Nations and stand-by partners to use standard equipment, guidelines, reporting tools and procedures, including streamlined and predictable service delivery. To date, some 100 United Nations and NGO ICT professionals have been certified as emergency responders through these workshops, which have enabled partners to better respond to emergencies.

Harmonization of results-based budgeting

79. The results-based 2008-2009 Biennial Support Budget was approved by the Executive Board at its 2008 first regular session. UNICEF continues to participate in inter-agency initiatives to harmonize and improve the results-based budgeting and cost classification methodologies of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA.

80. In April 2008, the three agencies jointly reviewed these two areas as they applied to the Biennial Support Budget, noting that although there was a high level of harmonization, continuing efforts were needed to reduce differences of approach and practice. Work will continue towards a similar approach, within the scope of their mandates, for the definition of 'programme' and 'support' costs.

81. To facilitate comparison and review, the three agencies agreed to identify at least one common management result and performance indicator in each of the 16 harmonized functions of the 2010-2011 Support Budget. Efforts will go towards

making the definitions of each function and its budgetary allocations more consistent across the agencies.

82. Ongoing efforts to improve harmonization will be reflected in the 2010-2011 Support Budget, to be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session in September 2009.

Harmonization of financial regulations and rules

83. The comptrollers of the United Nations, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF continue to develop a harmonized set of financial regulations and rules. A final draft of the harmonized regulations and an initial draft of the harmonized financial rules are being reviewed by stakeholders within the United Nations system. Following this review, comptrollers will determine whether they are ready for consideration by oversight committees and governing bodies in 2009.

Adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards

84. UNICEF continues its progress toward the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), planned for 2010. UNICEF is collaborating with the United Nations System project and is fully supportive of a harmonized approach to IPSAS adoption throughout the United Nations system.

85. The UNICEF IPSAS project governance structure is in place, and a team of specialists has been recruited. The IPSAS project strategic planning phase has been completed, with the strategy and scope defined, along with a project plan and communications plan. Implementation of the IPSAS adoption project will continue throughout 2009-2010.

Participation in Common Services and Common Premises initiatives

86. UNICEF serves as a member of the UNDG Task Team on Common Premises and assumed its Chair in July 2008. The Task Team has continued to develop and improve its web-based tools and guidelines for planning and management of common premises renovations and construction projects to assist UNCTs. Closely collaborating with UNCTs in high-risk duty stations, the Task Team advocates cost-effective eco-friendly building initiatives, a priority of the Secretary-General.

87. The Task Team developed and disseminated, in early 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding for Common Services approved by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. This aims to ensure accountability, transparency, participation and an effective governance structure. Common Services remain a challenge, as agencies feel that cost savings are rarely seen in the early stages due to high initial investment costs. However, qualitative benefits (such as improved and efficient quality of services) are apparent in many instances.

Humanitarian reform

88. UNICEF is committed to supporting the cluster approach and to fulfilling its global cluster lead role in nutrition and in water, sanitation and hygiene and, as co-lead, in education and in emergency telecommunications. This has entailed having dedicated coordination and technical support functions at headquarters and regional levels as well as increased staffing in country offices. These efforts have produced stronger support systems, including rosters for field-level cluster

coordination positions and global supply systems. While the cluster approach has been widely accepted and was cited in the recent IASC cluster evaluation as providing "value addition" in emergency preparedness and response and recovery, capacity gaps and inconsistent responses persist. UNICEF will therefore continue to strengthen systems, including training and capacity-building, in support of its commitments under the cluster approach and further refine the Core Commitments for Children. UNICEF will focus on mainstreaming cluster-related functions, especially as the Global Cluster Appeal comes to an end. However, resource mobilization for strong cluster leadership at field level will remain a challenge.

89. UNICEF is a major recipient of funds through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which provided the largest source of emergency funding for UNICEF in 2006 and 2007. UNICEF was instrumental in the development of new policy guidance for the CERF, which is a key element of the humanitarian reform. The CERF works best as a complement to UNICEF internal loan facility, the Emergency Programme Fund, which allows disbursement of emergency funds within 24 hours.

90. The Humanitarian Partnership Consultation was held in January 2008 to improve the way UNICEF, humanitarian NGOs and stand-by partners work together to realize children's rights in emergencies. This was a first step in UNICEF efforts to fully integrate into its work the Principles of Partnership established under the Global Humanitarian Platform. The consultation served to identify a series of key quick-impact interventions, such as the recently embarked-on revision of the Project Cooperation Agreement, as well as longer-term strategies to strengthen collaboration with NGOs in emergencies. The consultation established a solid basis for an ongoing mechanism for dialogue with the three major humanitarian NGO consortiums under the IASC. UNICEF will continue these consultations to further strengthen its partnerships with NGOs operating in emergencies.

D. Follow-up

91. The UNICEF action plan in response to the TCPR will be periodically reviewed. A senior-level steering committee oversees progress in implementing the TCPR recommendations and reports regularly to the Executive Director.